

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 251 851

CS 208 707

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TITLE Strengthening Language Control through Metaphor Analysis.
PUB DATE [83]
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Wyoming Conference on Freshman and Sophomore English (10th, Laramie, WY, July 6-10, 1981).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Cognitive Processes; *Content Analysis; *Discourse Analysis; Educational Theories; Figurative Language; Higher Education; *Language Processing; *Metaphors; Symbols (Literary); Teaching Methods; Writing Improvement; *Writing Instruction; Writing Processes; Writing Skills

ABSTRACT

Three universes of discourse are at work when writers create or use a metaphor: the analogical or metaphorical universe from which they borrow words, things, and relationships (sometimes called the "vehicle"); the contextual universe in which the analogy is being used (sometimes called the "topic"); and the metauniverse, or the comprehensive universe, that gives the analogical and contextual universes their meaning (sometimes called the "ground"). A verbal analysis of a metaphor from Shakespeare's "Hamlet" is given. Another method for metaphor analysis is explained, using a diagram that serves as a frame or apparatus for working out the "relevant relationship" (the metauniverse) that includes the analogical and contextual species. Because analyzing a metaphor is a microprocess of composing, metaphor analysis is central, not peripheral, to a composition course. First, it leads to increased semantic accuracy. Second, it provides a lively awareness of the profound importance of metaphor in human experience, thus helping the student transcend disciplinary boundaries. (HOD)

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Strengthening Language Control Through Metaphor Analysis

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Strengthening Language Control Through Metaphor Analysis

One implication of what Maxine Hairston, following Thomas Kuhn, terms the "paradigm shift" in composition theory and practice during the last decade is a renewed interest in metaphor ("The Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and the Revolution in the Teaching of Writing," CCC, 33 [February, 1982], 76). The reason for this interest is not difficult to see. If we reject the notion that language's chief task is to name the world of things or phenomena and substitute for this positivistic assumption the idea that language is the chief shaper of reality, then metaphor is at least equal to literal naming as a symbolic act. As far as composition theory and practice are concerned, the major recent articles on metaphor have been theoretical, taxonomic, and heuristic. Ann E. Berthoff's article, "Marvell's Stars, Schubert's Suns, Chekhov's Pipe: Recognizing and Interpreting Metaphor" (Sewanee Review, 89 [Winter 1981], 57-82), is theoretical rather than practical. Laurence Perrine's article, "Four Forms of Metaphor" (College English, 33 [November, 1972], 125-138), presents a useful classification of metaphors sorted according to whether or not the literal and metaphorical terms "are respectively stated or implied" (p. 125). Donald McQuade's article, "Metaphor, Thinking, and the Composing Process" (in Janice L. Hays, et al, eds., The Writer's Mind: Writing as a Mode of Thinking [Urbana: NCTE, 1983], 221-230), demonstrates the integral relation between metaphor and thought and between metaphor as a microprocess of and an aid to composing. My aim in this article is somewhat different than these three approaches. Rather than presenting an extended definition of metaphor, a taxonomy of metaphor, and a reminder that metaphors may be

used throughout the composing process, I shall describe an 'apparatus' which we (including both teachers and students) may use in order to demonstrate how metaphors function, to sharpen our ability to think, and to practice increased refinement in our ability to use words with exactness and awareness. But before I can present this method, we must come to terms with what 'metaphor' will mean in this discussion.

First, I will tell you what I do not mean by 'metaphor'. By 'metaphor' I do not mean mere figures of speech or tropes as the traditional handbooks announce. Metaphors are neither the icing on the cake of language nor the impediments to our having Cartesian clear and distinct ideas. Second, metaphors are not similes, because when we create a simile we say that something is like something else, not that something is something else. There is a vast difference between saying "A pretty girl is like a song" and "She's the song in my heart." By 'metaphor' I mean an analogy or what Aristotle calls a proportional metaphor (The Rhetoric of Aristotle, trans. Lane Cooper [New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1932], 193-4 and 208). When we create or use metaphors in this sense, we are saying that something is something else. The etymon of 'metaphor' gives us our clue. In Greek 'metaphor' means to carry something across (metapherein = to transfer); it means to transfer something from one category to another. When we use a proportional metaphor we say that there is an essential relationship obtaining both between thing A and thing B and between thing C and thing D. Things A and B, that is, are in one category, things C and D are in another, and in metaphor, we not only respect those two categories (difference), but we also say that things C and D are things A and B (similarity). Thus, the principle of classification is operative within a metaphor (the perception of

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similarity within difference and difference within similarity). Let us take a reading of a metaphor's complexity by using the term "universe of discourse" (1).

A universe is a discrete system or a category. The solar system is a system, fish are fish, people are people, blood circulates in the circulatory system, trees are trees, bricks are bricks, and so forth. But categories for human beings consist not only of things, they also consist of words, which we use to name or "create" the things, and relationships. Thus the phrase "universe of discourse" serves to remind us that metaphor analysis requires us to become expert jugglers of things, words, and relationships.

Most discussions of metaphor postulate two universes at work. In The Philosophy of Rhetoric, I. A. Richards names the two universes the "vehicle" and the "tenor" (New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1936, pp. 96-97). "In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction" (p. 93). The vehicle is the universe the metaphor is borrowed from and the tenor is "... the underlying idea or principal subject which the vehicle or figure means" (p. 97). Richards seems

1. Albert Upton, Design for Thinking [Stanford: Stanford Univ. Pr., 1961], 75-76, 92; Albert Upton, et al, Creative Analysis, rev. ed. [New York: Dutton, 1978], 160. Thomas G. Sticht uses the terms "chunk" and "domain of knowledge" for what I term "universe of discourse" ["Educational Uses of Metaphor," in Metaphor and Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 476, 479, and 481].

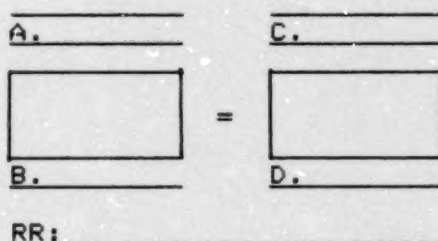
dissatisfied with this duality, though, when he observes that there is a third meaning at work not reducible to the tenor and vehicle. The "... co-presence of the vehicle and tenor results in a meaning (to be clearly distinguished from the tenor) which is not attainable without their interaction" (p. 100). Thus, Richards acknowledges three universes but names only two. Paul Ricoeur seems also to be locked within the unstable Richardsian dualism. In "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics" (New Literary Criticism, 6, Autumn 1974), Ricoeur reiterates Richards' opposition when he comments upon a metaphor's "... inner opposition between a pole of singular predication ... and a pole of general predication..." (p. 97). Continuing with the bipolar frame, Ricoeur maintains that metaphorical opposition occurs because "... a word receives a metaphorical meaning in specific contexts within which they are opposed to other words taken literally; this shift in meaning results mainly from a clash between literal meanings..." (p. 97). Ricoeur's proposition is regressive: to see the opposing universes as literal is to forsake Richards' valid perception that there is an opposition between the vehicle and the tenor. There is also an internal contradiction in Ricoeur's argument: if a metaphor opposes "a pole of singular identification ... and a pole of general predication" (p. 97), there cannot be, because of the ordinal conflict, a conflict between two literal orders; hence, there cannot be a metaphor.

Rather than two universes at work in a metaphor, I maintain that when we create or use a metaphor we put three universes of discourse to work: the analogical or metaphorical universe (the universe from which we borrow our words, things, and relationships; what Richards and Allan Paivio term the "vehicle"), the contextual

universe (the universe in which the analogy is being used; Paivio terms this universe the 'topic'), and the metauniverse (the all-encompassing or comprehensive universe that gives the analogical and contextual universes their meaning; Paivio terms this universe the 'ground') [Upton, Design, p. 75; Upton, Creative, p. 160; Allan Paivio, "Psychological Processes in the Comprehension of Metaphor," in Metaphor and Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 151]. W. B. Stanford (in Ambiguity in Greek Literature, [Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1936]) uses the metaphor of a stereoscope to show the relationship among these three universes, a suggestive metaphor that bears comparison with Upton's comment that "Universes of discourse are inhabited by things as well as words, and the secret of metaphorical utterance or interpretation is the trick of arranging the right things in the right way in the peep show of the imagination" (Design, p. 76). Common to both Upton and Stanford is the necessity of seeing the analogical and contextual universes as species of the genus metauniverse. An example from Hamlet will illustrate this point. When Shakespeare has Claudius tell Gertrude that "When sorrows come, they come not single spies, But in Battalions...." (Hamlet IV, v, 78-9), Shakespeare borrows things, words, and relationships from the universe of warfare to talk about things, words, and relationships in the universe of emotional experience. Thing A (adversaries) stands to thing B (opposing army) as thing C (sorrows) stands to thing D (human being). The recognition or articulation of a proportion is as far as most metaphor analyses and the Miller Analogies Test go. Let us descend, though, another layer lower. Things A:B::C:D can only be mutually analogous because they are included within a more comprehensive relationship. Adversaries attack an opposing army not

as single spies but in battalions within the universe of warfare; sorrows afflict human beings not singly but in an overwhelming number within the universe of emotional experience. So far the universes are discrete, although there is an implicit analogy between the two. What allowed Shakespeare to transfer a war metaphor to the universe of emotional experience, though, was the more general or comprehensive relationship "to come against something else not as separate units but in a large and powerful group to overcome" the opposition. When we perceive this comprehensive relationship, the two other universes come into focus and we achieve Stanford's stereoscopic vision.

To make the point of metaphor clearer, let us analyze another one, this time using the following diagram:



This diagram functions as the frame or 'apparatus' we can use to analyze metaphors (Upton, Design, pp. 76-77; Upton, Creative, p. 161). For ease in comprehension, though, a few words about the anatomy of this diagram are in order before we use it to do a sample metaphor analysis.

The top left-hand line, lines A and B, and the box between A and B delimit the analogical or metaphorical universe, the universe from which the metaphor is borrowed. The top right-hand line, lines C and D, and the box between C and D delimit the contextual universe, the universe the analogical universe is applied to. We name both universes on the top lines, we place the names of the things being put

in relationship on lines A, B, C, and D, and we place the relationship between the things in each universe inside the boxes. The line labelled RR stands for "relevant relationship" and constitutes the metauniverse, the comprehensive relationship that includes the analogical and contextual universes as species.

Now let me outline the steps to follow when diagraming a metaphor, followed by two sample metaphor analyses.

- 1) Underline the metaphorical words in the given example.
- 2) Name the analogical and contextual universes of discourse.
- 3) Name the things between which the relationship holds in the analogical universe and put their names on lines A and B.
- 4) Do the same for the contextual universe, placing the names on lines C and D.
- 5) Using as many of the given metaphorical words literally, set up a relationship between things A and B.
- 6) Choosing words not drawn from the analogical universe, set up a parallel relationship between things C and D.
- 7) Establish the relevant relationship.

Now for our promised analyses. I begin with a relatively simple metaphor in order to focus upon the analytic method: "The student tackled the difficult metaphor." 'Tackled' is the only metaphorical word in the quotation, and the analyzer should underline it. The two universes are "football" and "metaphor analysis." The things in the analogical universe are "tackler" and "ball carrier"; the things in the contextual universe are "student" and "metaphor." The proportion or ratio is that the tackler is to the ball carrier as the student is to the metaphor (A:B::C:D). Let us put these terms onto a diagram together with the several relationships that give them

their meaning.

Football
A. The tackler

tackled the

B. ball carrier

RR: got control of the

Metaphor analysis
C. The student

worked out the
solution to the

D. metaphor

A more difficult metaphor is found in the Prologue to Esme Wingfield-Stratford's The History of British Civilization. There Wingfield-Stratford states that "... the historian is not only a story teller but a witness, bound, according to the prescribed formula, to tell the whole truth -- within the limits of his space -- and nothing but the truth" (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1948, p. xv). The metaphorical words in this quotation are "witness, bound, according to the prescribed formula, to tell the whole truth ... and nothing but the truth." The two universes are "judicial procedure" and "historiography." The things in the analogical universe are "witness" and "judge and jury"; the things in the contextual universe are "historian" and "readers." The proportion or ratio is that the witness is to the judge and jury as the historian is to his or her readers. Again, let us put these terms onto a diagram together with the several relationships that give them their meaning.

Judicial Procedure

A. A witness

is bound by the pre-
scribed legal formula
to tell the truth and
nothing but the truth
to the

B. Judge and jury

Historiography

C. An historian

is expected by the
profession to give an
accurate account of
historical events to

D. Historians and other
readers

RR: is obligated to give a sound and faithful recounting of the
facts and relationships to the

Now that we have two examples of metaphor analysis to contemplate, I would like to make several observations about the operation. First, there is usually an increasing order of abstraction as we move from the analogical universe to the contextual universe. This is not surprising, because one of the chief uses for metaphors is to learn about the unfamiliar or the abstract by "seeing" the unfamiliar or the abstract analogically through the glasses of the familiar or the concrete. Thus, the analogical universe is generally more concrete than the contextual universe, and the contextual universe, in turn, is less abstract than the metauniverse. Second, the metauniverse relationship is, taxonomically speaking, the genus relationship of which the analogical and contextual universes are species. The metauniverse, that is, states the essential relationship that allows us to see the two other universes as being similar yet different. Common to tackling a runner and successfully analyzing a metaphor is getting control of the object, whether physical (the former) or intellectual (the latter). Common to testifying in court and writing a history is the obligation of giving a sound and faithful recounting of the facts and relationships to the judge and jury (the former) and to one's reading public (the latter). The test of whether or not we have stated an accurate relevant relationship is to put it in the analogical and contextual boxes and see if it manifests the essential relationship between the things A and B or things C and D. Third, if you have ever tuned a stringed instrument, you know that you usually have to make many adjustments until the instrument is in tune, and that when it is in tune it has order, resonance, and beauty. Shakespeare made this point eloquently in Sonnet 8:

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
 Strikes each in each by mutual ordering,
 Resembling sire, and child, and happy mother,
 Who all in one one pleasing note do sing.

Analogically, when analyzing a metaphor we usually have to make a large number of adjustments until our complex perception is ordered. (Allan Paivio terms this moment of ordering "the click of comprehension" [Metaphor and Thought, p. 155]). Analyzing a metaphor thus reproduces, in miniature, all the subtle operations, frustrations, and adjustments we go through whenever we write, a point admirably made by Donald McQuade ("Metaphor, Thinking, and the Composing Process," in Janice L. Hays, et al, eds., The Writer's Mind: Writing as a Mode of Thinking [Urbana: NCTE, 1983], pp. 221 and 225 ff.). Albert Upton extends the value of metaphor analysis from writing to reading as well when he observes that "... the systematic analysis of metaphor ... develops most of the basic semantic skills involved in effective reading and writing..." ("A Linguistic Approach to Problems of Analysis and Interpretation," Journal of Communication, 14 [June 1964], p. 121). Just as it is the rare person who uses a pen to work a crossword puzzle, so it is the rare metaphor analyzer who uses a pen to diagram a metaphor. A pencil and an eraser are almost necessary equipment for metaphor analysis. As when brainstorming or inventing, it pays when analyzing a metaphor to jot down words and phrases as the analyzer thinks of them in the margins of the page the diagram is on. A hint of an idea might come in useful if one line of inquiry does not work out, and it frequently happens that an analyzer will transfer a word or phrase from one universe to another as he tightens the pegs of the diagram until it has order, resonance, and beauty. Finally, to use Melville's apt metaphor, the successful

analysis of a metaphor gives a top-gallant delight, a delight not unlike having written a sound composition.

One advantage to this form for metaphor analysis is that it is infinitely adaptable to all degrees of metaphorical complexity. There is no one correct size for the relationship boxes, for example; their size is relative to a given metaphor's complexity. The metaphor "I put a new coat of paint on my house this summer" requires a small pair of boxes; a reasonably thorough analysis of Melville's gimbal-lamp and mat-loom metaphors from Moby-Dick may require a full page for each metaphor. Here, as in all sound learning theory, the principle of progressive resistance operates. Have your students begin with simple metaphors, move on to more complicated ones, and then progressively increase the metaphor's complexity as your students' ability to analyze them increases withal. By such increases in complexity, we can use metaphor analysis as an economical and focussed way to develop what some cognitive psychologists call "concept-formation" and Piaget terms the ability to think on the level of "formal operations." If, as Annette N. Bradford and Janice Hays have reminded us, many of our students are unable to think on the level of formal concepts, then any pointed means by which we can teach concept formation should be welcome (Annette N. Bradford, "Cognitive Immaturity and Remedial College Writers," and Janice N. Hays, "The Development of Discursive Maturity in College Writers," in The Writer's Mind: Writing as a Mode of Thinking [Urbana: NCTE, 1983], 15-24 and 127-144). Metaphor analysis is one such pointed means. Thomas G. Sticht makes the connection between training in metaphor analysis and the development of formal concepts or classification explicit.

The fact that pre-adolescents and marginally literate adults can so readily be taught certain of

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the analytic skills used in producing representation formats such as matrices and metaphors, suggests that what is being learned is not some fundamentally new, difficult mode of thinking. Rather, it appears that what is happening is that students are learning metacognitive skills of categorization applied to situations where the propensity for such activities is low. Cole and Scribner ... point out that apparently one function for schooling is to increase the range of situations in which people use the fundamental cognitive processes involved in classification; schooled persons seek relationships in a greater variety of situations by appealing to a broader range of ways in which things, events, and processes could be related ("Educational Uses of Metaphor," in Metaphor and Thought [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 1979], 484).

That there is a correlation between being able to analyze metaphors and to think on the formal operations level is not a matter of academic speculation. Richard M. Billow conducted a series of experiments based upon the relationship between classification and metaphor and determined that there was a high correlation between "metaphor comprehension" and "maturing cognitive operations..." (Developmental Psychology, 11 [1975], 415-423). Billow's conclusion was that "Proportional metaphor comprehension was highly related ($p < .01$) to advancement in formal operational development" (p. 415).

Because analyzing a metaphor is a microprocess of composing, I see metaphor analysis as central, not peripheral, to a composition course. First, metaphor analysis leads to increased semantic accuracy. As the committee that wrote Language in General Education (New York: Appleton-Century, 1940) state, being able "... to recognize metaphor, and to deal with it successfully in reading, writing, speech, and thinking can be, and is, one of the most generally useful accomplishments that a study of language has to offer" (p. 142). As students work out their analyses, they cannot avoid having to grapple

with and achieve adequate naming of categories, connecting words with the thoughts and things they symbolize, adjusting levels of abstraction, choosing apt words, formulating complex relationships, and achieving parallelism of words and thoughts. As I observed in the previous paragraph, metaphor analysis thus becomes an economical and focused way in which we can increase our students' ability to perform what Piaget calls "formal operations" and what other psychologists and pedagogues call "concept formation." Second, a lively awareness of the profound importance of metaphor in human experience will help our students, us, and our colleagues transcend disciplinary boundaries. "Metaphor, like abstractions, cuts across the boundaries of subject fields, and its recognition and mastery is as vital to the straight thinking of the scientist as it is to the sensitiveness of the literary critic or the effectiveness of the poet" (Language in General Education, p. 124). I have already mentioned Melville's gimbal-lamp and mat-loom metaphors, so they will represent art. For philosophy (and I include religion in this category as well), Plato's Allegory of the Cave, Nietzsche's metaphor of the tight-rope walker crossing the abyss, the wheel of death and rebirth in the Bhagavad-Gita, and the sheep-shepherd metaphor of the Twenty-third Psalm will serve. For science, the wave metaphor of modern physics has been profoundly influential, as Lancelot Hogben has demonstrated in Science and the Citizen (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1956, pp. 314-352). About the importance of metaphor to scientific hypotheses, Hogben observes that "... useful and fruitful facts are the permanent contribution of scientific inquiry to the edifice of human knowledge, and hypotheses are the scaffolding of metaphors" (p. 329), a view recently reiterated by David Edge ("Technological Metaphor and Social

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Control," New Literary History, 6 [Autumn 1974], 135-147). In short, metaphorical perception is at the heart of every creative endeavor, be it a poem, a philosophical or religious system, or a scientific hypothesis. If metaphor is essential to every intellectual discipline, then the discipline of metaphor analysis is an eminently worthwhile pedagogical activity.

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